



## **Using Foot Analysis to Guide Running Shoe Choices and Achieve Injury Prevention (FY02-2049) – FUNDING WITHDRAWN**

*Note: although this project was initially selected to receive HPPI funding, the funding award was withdrawn when implementation issues (as described below) could not be resolved.*

### Impact

Although the principles behind this initiative were sound, specific logistical barriers prevented implementation of the project.

### Description

About 20% of serious injuries and 60% of minor injuries are associated with exercise in the military. Running is one of the most common forms of exercise in the US Army. A foot-type analysis is widely used to guide running shoe choices, but this method has not been fully evaluated for its effectiveness in reducing injuries. The purpose of this initiative was to evaluate whether fitting running shoes to particular characteristics of Soldiers' feet can reduce injuries. The project was to involve three groups. One group was to be evaluated for foot arch height, foot flexibility, and body weight and a specific shoe recommendation given based on this evaluation. A second group was to be advised to buy new shoes after running a specific number of miles in their current shoes. The third group was to be the control and would receive no specific advice. The initial project planned for a voucher be issued to the groups receiving the shoe recommendations to help those Soldiers purchase better running shoes than they would normally purchase. However, the project was not implemented and did not receive HPPI funding.

### Barriers

Legal issues regarding the use of vouchers for shoe purchases could not be resolved.

### Innovative Features

This program has been ongoing since November 1999. The effectiveness of this program had only been evaluated against anecdotal evidence.

### Lesson Learned

- Check legal issues carefully if your program provides something of monetary value (i.e., a voucher to purchase shoes).
- Look into DA regulations, your installation SOPs, etc. and discuss the program with knowledgeable personnel such as DA legal counsel.
- If you think there is *any* chance there will be a legal issues along these lines, make sure to investigate with installation legal resources FIRST to be sure you can proceed.